

SEP 16 2003

Remarks**TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800**

In the present application, amendments to claims 1 and 40 are offered. Claims 1 to 41 remain pending. Reexamination and reconsideration in light of these amendments and the following discussion is respectfully requested.

The Examiner had objected to claim 1 and suggested that -- of -- be inserted into claim 1, line 10, before "the first ferrule end," and before, "the second ferrule end." Claim 1 has been amended to reflect the Examiner's suggestion. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

In a telephone interview between the Examiner and Applicants' representative Alan Stewart on September 15, 2003, the Takahashi '191 reference cited in a Final Rejection mailed on July 11, 2003, was discussed. In the interview, the rotational and longitudinal movement of the ferrules of the Takahashi '191 reference were pointed out and the difference between the teaching of this reference and the pending claims was discussed. The Examiner noted that this difference was not clear before and agreed to review the claims to determine the allowability of the claims in light of this difference. In addition, amendments to claim 40 were discussed to place this claim in condition for allowance. The result of the discussions during the interview is reflected in the remarks below regarding the rejections of the pending claims.

In the Final Rejection mailed on July 11, 2003, the Examiner cited Takahashi, U.S. Patent No. 6,341,191, along with other references, in rejecting claims 1 to 41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious. These rejections are traversed.

Claim 40 has been amended to recite, in part, a method of using a fiber optic bulkhead adapter providing the adapter includes an integral optical fiber attenuation hub with an attenuator and first and second ferrules, the ferrules being fixed with respect to each other.

In each of the rejections, Takahashi '191 is cited for teaching that the ferrule ends of the attenuation hub are fixed with respect to each other, as recited in independent claims 1, 9, 16, 21, 28, 34 and 40. However, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, Takahashi '191 clearly shows that the ferrule ends of the attenuation hub are movable with respect to each other. Takahashi teaches a variable attenuation type optical power attenuator where the attenuation is provided by an air gap S between ferrule end surfaces 12 and 13. The degree of attenuation provided by the attenuator is varied by varying the size of the air gap. See FIGS. 2B, 3B, 4B and 5, and col. 5, lines 1 to 45. The size of the air gap is varied by rotation of rotatable ferrule 9 with respect to

fixed ferrule 8. Ferrule end faces 12 and 13 are shaped so that rotation of ferrule 9 will also move the ferrules longitudinally with respect to each other.

Thus, Takahashi '191 clearly teaches that the ferrule not be fixed with respect to each other. In fact, Takahashi '191 teaches away from the limitation recited in claims 1, 9, 16, 21, 28, 34 and 40, that the ends of the ferrule within the adapter be fixed with respect to each other.

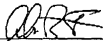
For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claims 1, 9, 16, 21, 28, 34 and 40 are not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and are in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Claims 2 to 8, 10 to 15, 17 to 20, 22 to 27, 29 to 33, 35 to 39 and 41 depend from and further limit independent claims 1, 9, 16, 21, 28, 34 and 40, respectively. For at least the same reasons cited above with regard to claims 1, 9, 16, 21, 28, 34 and 40, Applicants submit that the remaining dependent claims are not rendered obvious by the cited prior art and are in condition for immediate allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Amendment and Response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative Alan Stewart, at 612.371.5376.

Respectfully submitted,
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

Date: September 16, 2003

By: 
Name: Alan R. Stewart
Reg. No.: 47,974
ARS:pll

FAX RECEIVED

SEP 16 2003

TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800